STATEMENT BY THE AAAS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

AAAS Urges US to Ratify Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF SCIENCE • 7 APRIL 2014

The American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) seeks to "advance science, engineering and innovation throughout the world for the benefit of all people." We pursue this mission through various activities aimed at fostering quality science and technology education for everyone, and strengthening and diversifying the science and technology workforce. In particular, AAAS has long pursued programs aimed at promoting equal access to science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education for students with disabilities and creating competitive opportunities for persons with disabilities to pursue careers in STEM.

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities provides a framework for comprehensively addressing the rights of persons with disabilities, to be implemented by each nation consistent with its own legal and administrative systems. The Convention explicitly recognizes the rights of persons with disabilities to enjoy equal access to medical facilities, education, workplaces, and communications technologies. Furthermore, it calls on nations to support research and development on adaptive goods and services, as well as new assistive technologies; encourages international cooperation in research, facilitating access to scientific and technical knowledge, and standards for sharing medical and technological advances; and reiterates the prohibition against medical or scientific experimentation on any person without their free consent.

The Convention was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in December 2006, following years of global negotiation in which the United States played a key role and the Americans with Disabilities Act served as the model. A majority of the world's nations have subsequently become a party to the Convention, giving them and the industries they support the opportunity to engage at a global level in the development and implementation of accessible programs, policies and products to improve the lives of persons living with disabilities.

Given AAAS's long-standing commitment to increase access to and participation in science and technology by persons with disabilities, and affirming that research and development benefit from intellectual and experiential diversity, the AAAS Board of Directors strongly urges US ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Approved by the AAAS Board of Directors on 7 April 2014 and endorsed by the following scientific organizations: American Educational Research Association American Orthopsychiatric Association, American Physical Society, Consortium of Social Science Associations, and Sociologists Without Borders.